

# Spark Gap

Volume 27, Issue 8, August 2010 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for Twenty-Six Years*

## VE TEAM UPDATE



WA9DYT,  
W9DYU,  
WA9DYV  
1963

*The Official  
Newsletter of the  
Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club*



Mid-State Amateur  
Radio Club  
P. O. Box 836  
Franklin, IN 46131  
[www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org)

The passing of our VE team responsibilities from Dave, KA9OOH (SK), to Rhonda, WS9H, prompted me to think about the Volunteer Examiner program, and how licensing has changed so radically during my years in amateur radio. Those licensed since 1984 have no doubt heard how

“easy” getting a ham radio license is these days, compared to “back in the day”. Well, having lived through the intimidating process, I can tell you it is a much more “applicant friendly” now.

When I came into the hobby in 1962, there were 6 license classes; Novice, Technician, General, Conditional, Advanced, and Extra. The Novice and Technician tests were administered by mail under the direct supervision of a General class or higher licensee. The F.C.C. sent the exam directly to the examiner, who swore, under threat of his own license revocation, that the test questions would be kept secret and administered properly. The test, along with the answer sheet, was mailed back to the F.C.C. and it was usually at least 6 weeks until you received your license, or a rejection in the mail. The Novice class license was earned by passing a 5 w.p.m. Morse code test (1 minute perfect copy), along with a written exam consisting of 20 multiple choice questions on basic electronic theory. Novices were only allowed to operate code on portions of 15, 40, and 80 meters, and the license was good for only one year (non-renewable). The next step was the Technician class license, which only had privileges above 50 MHz. The written exams for Technician and General were the

same, consisting of 50 multiple choice questions on General theory and regulations. The General class was administered by an F.C.C. examiner with a code exam of 13 w.p.m.

The F.C.C. would not reveal the actual test questions. There were only license manuals with examples as a study guide, outlining the sort of knowledge necessary to pass the exams. You could not memorize the questions, and some had more than one correct answer, requiring you to choose the most correct. There were calculations, some drawing, and circuit identification required.

The General, Advanced, and Extra exams had to be taken at an F.C.C. examination point. Prerequisite for Extra class was 2 years as General or Advanced. Exams were only available monthly in Chicago, or quarterly in Indianapolis at the Federal Building. If you failed, you could not take the exam again for 30 days. If you passed the code, but failed the written element, you were not credited for the code portion. The most intimidating part, aside from months of hard study, was having to “appear in person” before a no nonsense, stern, Secret Service/I.R.S looking, official F.C.C. field agent. You had to request a Form 610 by mail, complete it, and bring it with you. I remember entering the large, drab, marble floored, high ceiling, dimly lit room, along with 30-40 other equally nervous General class applicants. You were “checked in” and told to take a place at one of the long tables, and provided with a blank sheet of paper. You could keep nothing but two lead pencils on the table. We were then given headsets for the 13 w.p.m. code test. For five long minutes, you somehow had to get one minute of perfect copy down on paper, while shaking and sweating with fingers tightly gripping a pencil that refused to move.

*(cont. on next page)*

## VE TEAM (cont.)

The examiner collected the papers and went back to his desk to do the grading as we sat in silent agony, just waiting and hoping somehow to pass. Names were called one at a time as papers were graded for pass or fail. Those who did not pass were not allowed to take the written exam and shown the door. I was fortunate to pass the code, and then took the written portion. If you wished to take the Advanced exam, the agent graded your test, otherwise you went home and waited for the mailman and prayed. I elected to try the Advanced, so he graded my exam and I passed. I then took the Advanced, which seemed less difficult than the General. I still had to wait over 6 weeks for my license to arrive in the mail, but did not know if it would be General or Advanced until my "ticket" arrived. You were not allowed to use your new privileges back then until you had the license in hand.

As one who has taken amateur exams (Novice, Technician, General, Advanced) the "old way" and the "new way" (Extra) under the VE system, I can tell you, it IS easier now. Admittedly, there is more material to study, with the advent of digital modes, satellite, solid state, and other advances. The scope of the material is greater, but the exams are much easier for which to prepare, with knowledge of the actual questions, and on-line practice questions to memorize by repetition. VE testing locations are convenient, accessible, and friendly, and you can retest immediately. And, did I mention no more sweaty, shaky handed 5, 13 or 20 w.p.m. code tests? — Steve K9DY

## VEC Testing

Our Volunteer Examiner Coordinator (VEC) team is ARRL accredited, and capable of administering any amateur radio test. As a public service, the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club sponsors test sessions after all but one of its monthly meetings. (September testing is done prior to the picnic.) Meetings begin at 8:00 AM with testing following the meeting (begins about 9:30 AM until 11:00 AM).

## KERCHUNKER FUND

All it takes is One Dollar, a buck, four quarters or some loose change to have a chance at winning the monthly Kerchunker Fund. Many of us don't even think about where the money goes or why we donate except to win half the pot.

Maybe it is time for a short club history lesson. The Kerchunker Fund was established in the mid-eighties by then Repeater Trustee Tom Carroll-N9AZD. You see back then all of our equipment was homemade, jury rigged and held together by electrical tape and copper wire. As things broke or were updated we needed a quick way to access some petty cash to get the repeater up and running again. Thus...The Kerchunker Fund.

So why hang a dubious title on this spare change cash reserve? At the time Tom and club members thought it appropriate title since some folks would key up the repeater without giving an official station ID. According to the FCC rules that is illegal and downright inconsiderate.

This repeater factoid comes to mind as Jay Chrisman-AA9YP puts the finishing touches on the Franklin Link project and ups the transmit power so the world, or at least central Indiana hams, can hear us talking. Some of that Kerchunker Fund will be used for extra parts and paint.

Next up... a cleanup, fix up and paint party on the old repeater shack at the base of the Franklin tower. We'll be looking for a few carpenters with tools, painters and warm bodies to get the job done. Club Prez, Steve Carmean-K9DY, will be looking for a few volunteers at the next meeting. -Jack w8ish ■

## Officers

**President:**  
Steve Carmean,  
K9DY

**Vice President:**  
Dave Daily,  
KB9LOT

**Secretary:**  
Robert Jones,  
KC9NJM

**Treasurer:**  
Jacki Frederick,  
K16QOG

**Repeater Trustee:**  
Jay Chrisman,  
AA9YP

**Spark Gap Editors:**  
Bob LaGrange,  
N9SIU

**Linda Harshbarger,**  
KC9GCH

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### GREENWOOD MARCHING BAND INVITATIONAL

**SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2009  
1:30 PM TO 11:00 PM**

Please mark your calendars for the Greenwood Marching Band Invitational to be held at the Greenwood High School Football Field. This event has been held annually for the past thirty years and MARC has been assisting them with public safety for twelve years.

This event needs all available hams that can help due to the large numbers of spectators and the bands that come to perform. There are usually large amounts of people that come to see the bands and there are many places around the football field where they park their cars. The band organization at Greenwood High School is always appreciative of our professionalism and the service our club members provide them. As usual we will have access to food and drinks available to all that help with this event.

If possible it would be good if we could have at least 25 hams help with this event. If you have not helped in the past you are in for a real treat and also provide good exposure of Ham Radio to the public. We will conduct our net on 146.550 MHz (simplex). Talk in will be on the 146.835 MHz repeater (Pl. 151.4) until we switch to the simplex frequency. This event helps us prepare for using simplex frequencies on location if radio communications were needed during an emergency.

What you will need for the event:

1. Your favorite HT and spare battery pack.
2. Safety vest (MARC has a limited quantity) Home Depot, Menards etc.
3. Flashlight with a wand for directing traffic (these are available online)
4. A chair
5. Water, the band organization does have water but it is good to bring your own.
6. Comfortable shoes

The safety vest and flashlight with a wand are very important safety items. They are needed for your safety as well as the public will know to come to you if there is a problem. You will use these safety items for other events that use HAMS for public safety. There will be a sign-up sheet for the event at the next club meeting or contact me by e-mail. If you have a friend that is a HAM please feel free to bring them along also.

73, Bob N9SIU e-mail n9siu at yahoo.com

## JAMBOREE

ARRL News: August 2010

The 2010 National Scout Jamboree — celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America — was held July 26-August 4 at Fort AP Hill in Virginia. According to ARRL Rocky Mountain Division Director and K2BSA Station Coordinator/Manager Brian Milesosky, N5ZGT, ham radio was a big part of the event that attracted more than 43,000 participants from across the nation and around the world.

K2BSA has been a fixture at the BSA National Jamboree since the 1970s. This year, it had three elements: a demonstration station, licensing classes and VE exams, and radio merit badge instruction.

Milesosky said that nearly 6000 youth scouts — 13 percent of the total Jamboree attendance — received thorough exposure to ham radio, touring the K2BSA station and getting on the airwaves. Six lucky scouts conducted a memorable contact with astronaut Doug Wheelock, KF5BOC, aboard the International Space Station (ISS) before a crowd of Jamboree participants.

Calling K2BSA's operation at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree "a resounding success," Milesosky thanked everyone who worked K2BSA while it was on the air, with special thanks to all scouts and Scouters who attended the Jamboree. "All eyes are on 2013 when the next National Jamboree will be held at its new permanent location: the Summit Bechtel Family National Scouting Reserve, located adjacent to the New River Gorge National River Park in West Virginia," he said. "We look forward to K2BSA to once again carry on its tradition of introducing thousands of youth to the extraordinary hobby and service of Amateur Radio."

**WA9RDF**

**Repeater**

**146.835/**

**146.235 MHz**

**151.4 Hz PL**

**Tone**

**Weekly Net**

**Every Sunday**

**at 7PM ET**

***Tune in to hear  
the ARRL  
Newsline!***

*The Mid-State  
Amateur Radio Club  
sponsors a weekly  
traffic and social net  
on our repeater. The  
net begins at 7:00  
p.m. local time, and  
features local news,  
announcements, and  
NTS traffic, as well as  
rebroadcasts of  
Amateur Radio  
Newsline. This is a  
great chance to  
meet other local  
amateur radio  
operators and test  
your operating  
skills.*

# 2010 Schedule of Events

## AUGUST 2010

- 15 40th Annual Lafayette Hamfest, Lafayette, IN**  
Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds, Home Econ Building, Lafayette, IN
- 21 MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**  
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)
- 21 3rd Annual Tailgators Hamfest, Osgood, IN**
- 28 Owen-Monroe Amateur Radio Hamfest, Spencer, IN**

## SEPTEMBER 2010

- 18 MARC Meeting, Picnic and Elections - 11:00 AM, Franklin, IN**  
VEC testing will begin at 8:00 AM at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. Picnic will begin at about 11:00 AM at the Union Christian Church at 1267 East County Road 300 South in Franklin. Following the food will be a short meeting and election of officers.
- 25 Greenwood Band Contest, Greenwood High School, Greenwood, IN**  
Contact Bob LaGrange (N9SIU) at n9siu@yahoo.com to volunteer.

## OCTOBER 2010

- 9 Lake County Amateur Radio Club Hamfest, Crown Point, IN**
- 16 MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**  
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)
- 16 Indianapolis (Lawrence) Marathon**  
Contact Mike Palmer (N9FEB) at [www.indyhams.org](http://www.indyhams.org) for more information or to volunteer.
- 31 Halloween - Goblin Patrol**  
Contact Dave Daily (KB9LOT) at [vicepresident@midstatehams.org](mailto:vicepresident@midstatehams.org) to volunteer.

## NOVEMBER 2010

- 6 Indianapolis Monumental Marathon**  
Contact Mike Palmer (N9FEB) at [www.indyhams.org](http://www.indyhams.org) for more information or to volunteer.
- 13-14 Ft. Wayne Hamfest; Allen County War Memorial Coliseum Exposition Center, Ft. Wayne, IN**
- 20 MARC Meeting - 8:00 AM, Franklin, IN**  
Located at the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN. VEC Testing after the meeting (approx. 9:30 am to 11:00 am)
- 25 Thanksgiving Day**
- 27 Evansville Hamfest; Vanderburgh Co. 4-H Center, Evansville, IN**



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317.887.2558

*Spark Gap*

### Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the **THIRD SATURDAY** of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

**See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.**